

Book review

M. S. Jairajpuri and W. Ahmad:

Dorylaimida. Free-living, predaceous and plant-parasitic nematodes

There is hardly another branch in special zoology which shows such a great development nowadays as nematology, the study of free-living and plant-parasitic nematodes. The number of scientists working on this group shows also an increasing tendency although the restricted number of manuals, summarizing works or compilations are of a heavy drawback for them.

The new book of JAIRAJPURI and AHMAD is therefore especially welcome. It deals with one of the most important and extensive groups of Nematoda, the order Dorylaimida. These animals live in soil, freshwater and on plants, and are distributed over the world, in every sort of habitats. They are very frequent everywhere, and often dominant both in number of specimens and that of species. The quantity of species and higher taxa hitherto described in this order is the highest within the Nematoda: there are about 1700 known species grouped in over 200 genera. But as in every large group of animals, an orientation in the system of Dorylaimida is very difficult, and causes much trouble even for taxonomists.

The authors have undertaken a great task indeed in summarizing, evaluating and systematizing the informations published in morphology and taxonomy of Dorylaimida. Their book is a compilation in best sense of word. Both the authors, especially the senior one, belong to the best known and most experienced authorities in the subject. The present work is a result of their multi-year studies.

"Dorylaimida" consists of two main parts: Morphology and Systematics. In the chapters on morphology (53 pages) a complete picture can be found of all the characteristics which are necessary to recognize and orientate the dorylaims. The taxonomic chapters (375 pages) give a clear and well-arranged system of the whole group, from order to genera. Well-usable identification keys serve as helping hand in recognizing the taxa. Every genus is defined by good characteristics and illustrated by pictures of one or more species. The known species are then enumerated with synonyms under the genera.

The monumental work is a true profit for science. It will remain a standard on the group for many years to come. Every nematologist may say thanks to the authors for their invaluable publication.

The voluminous handbook counts 458 pages and is very well illustrated with 159 figures containing approximately 1500 drawings in detail. It was published in 1992 by the famous publisher, E. J. Brill, Leiden, The Netherlands. It costs US \$85.75.

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